

Exod 04-08-15b

Let's pick up our study now in Exodus chapter 32. It's taking Moses a good long time, at least in our study, to get down the mountain. God told him that the people of Israel had destroyed themselves, had disintegrated themselves at the foot of the mountain.

Joshua, of course, was not up with Moses, did not hear God explain what had happened. So, when he hears this Anot taking place, they've been gone nearly a month and a half, they've been gone 40 days. And so he says, well, while we were gone, there must have been an attack, there must have been an enemy that came in.

And as we were just talking about, there was an enemy. It's like the old, old, 30 years ago, Pogo comic strip. He was famous for saying, we have met the enemy and he is us.

And they have corrupted themselves, they have destroyed themselves. It is not the voice of the song of the strong. It is not the voice of the response of the mighty.

It is not the voice of the song or the response of the weak, the weakened, Moses says. It is, and he doesn't use the word voice the third time. The word kol, oh, I'm sorry, he does use it.

The word kol is used for voice or sound of Anot, of the strong. And then kol Anot of the weak, but it is the kol Anot that I am hearing. And there is no qualification of it at all.

It is the sound of this song or this response. This word is translated song in some places in Scripture, such as in 1 Samuel, both in chapter 18 and in chapter 1, where it talks about the song of the women who say, Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands. It is called, the verb there is anah, and this is the verb form rather than the noun.

We have the noun form here, which is a feminine form. And it is actually formed by making an infinitive out of the word. When we use an infinitive, like we say to walk or to swim, to sing, and literally the infinitive or infinitive construct here is, you know, an infinitive makes a noun out of a verb.

To swim is great, to swim is refreshing. Well, you are saying, you are using that as a subject. And so Anot here is taking the verb anah and making it into a noun form.

But it is used in its regular verb form in 1 Samuel. It is used that way in Psalm 147. Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving.

Sing praises to our God on the lyre, on a musical instrument. And so this implies that there is some sort of chanting or singing going on with musical accompaniment. Same thing in Psalm 119, 172.

Let my tongue sing of your word, for all your commandments are righteousness. So there is a response that comes from the tongue. Numbers 21, 17.

Israel sang this song, spring up, oh well, sing to it. We saw it earlier in Exodus chapter 15, when Miriam saw the floating Egyptians in the Red Sea. Everybody was happy.

We survived and they didn't. So Miriam says, sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and the rider he has hurled into the sea.

And this was anah used in the sense of singing or chanting or responding in some way with an exaltation type of voice. It can also be a dirge of defeat. You find it of course used in that sense here in Exodus 32.

Jeremiah chapter 25. God tells Jeremiah, you will prophesy against them all these words. You shall say to them, the Lord will roar from on high and utter his voice from his holy habitation.

He will roar mightily against his fold. And he will shout like those who tread grapes against all the inhabitants of the earth. And this idea that it is going to be a sound of mourning, a sound of those who are under judgment is there in Jeremiah 25.

The same thing in Jeremiah 51 and verse 14. The Lord of hosts has sworn by himself, I will fill you with a population like locusts and they will cry out with shouts of victory. This idea of a shout or a sound is in this anah.

Isaiah 13.22 is another usage of that same. Hyenas will howl in their fortified towers. Jackals in their luxurious palaces.

Fateful time will soon come. The days will not be prolonged. The howling there of the hyenas and the jackals is what happens when you think further than your mouth can keep up.

Hyenas and jackals are howling. This is from the word anah. They are responding.

They are making their noise. Well, why do we care about this? What difference does it make that Moses gives this little three line poem? Moses knows from what God told him that the people have destroyed themselves. In another place, God says, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Now, the lack of knowledge doesn't come because God didn't give it to them. It's because they didn't listen to it. They have already heard the covenant.

They have already been sprinkled with the blood. They have already said all that the Lord has said we will do. They know the word of God.

It's not a matter of academic knowledge. It is a matter of what are you going to do with it. And, of course, Moses is gone a couple of weeks and they immediately depart and go somewhere else.

We do this all the time, don't we? We do things and we know better. Academically, if we were to sit down and take a written test, we could give all the right answers. But if you look at the track

of our life, and this is all of us, we say, well, I did not follow what I know to be best.

I didn't follow what I know to be right. I had a goal. I had an objective.

I had a plan. But I did not fulfill it. I failed.

I signed up for the Atkins diet or the low-carb diet or the watermelon diet or some other diet. I told myself I would get on this diet. I would get down to a size such and such by a certain time.

It didn't happen. I mean, this is universal among women and even a lot of guys as well. I'm going to get back into that pair of trousers by the end of the summer or else, and it doesn't happen.

We have grand goals. We have a knowledge of what is right. But we don't carry through.

We don't make it happen. So here's the question that this passage poses to us. If we are the people dwelling at the foot of the mountain right now and Moses is coming down toward us and he hears a song, he hears the noise of the camp, what kind of a noise is it? What kind of noise do we make? Are we defeated? Are we victorious? Or are we completely distracted and singing some song that has nothing to do with the plan of God? These are the three kinds of song or the three kinds of response that Moses identifies, isn't it? He says, this is not type A song.

It is not the song of the victorious. It is not the song of somebody who has, by faith, overcome. This is not a Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3 song.

To him that overcomes, I will grant. This is not the song or the wail or the lament of someone who tried and failed and recognizes that they have failed and is singing. This is the drunken song of those who just don't care.

That's the third kind of song. What kind of song do we make? What kind of response do we have to the Word of God? Do we say yes and succeed? Do we say yes and fail? Or are we not even on the same page? Singing out of a completely different book. That's what this poem faces us with.

Well, so it was, verse 19, as soon as he came near the camp that he saw the calf and the dancing. Now this is our first reference to the dancing. But the dancing accompanies the song.

He saw the calf and the dancing so Moses' anger became hot. Now Moses' anger wasn't hot when God told him what the people had done. It doesn't say Moses' anger was hot when Joshua asked him the question.

See, this is my problem. Somebody asks me a question, my anger gets heated up at the point of the question. Moses does a great job until he sees with his own eyes the dancing and the calf.

And when he sees it, it just sets him off. His anger became hot. What did God say up in verse

10? Moses, let me alone that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them and I will make of you a great nation.

Moses says, oh no Lord, don't let your anger burn hot. Let me go down and let my anger burn hot. So his anger became hot.

He cast the tablets out of his hand and broke them at the foot of the mountain. Now we have felt the license to analyze the actions of people like Elijah on Mount Carmel or the Apostle Paul going to Jerusalem. And even where Scripture does not explicitly say this was good or this was bad, we have tried to make a determination in the light of the rest of the Word of God.

Was this something the person should do? Should Elijah have slain all the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel? Was that his job? Well, some say yes, some say no. Should the Apostle Paul have gone to Jerusalem? Some say yes, some say no. How about Moses smashing the tablets? Let me ask you this question.

If God gave us the tablets, if you and I, if one of us is standing here with the tablets written with the finger of God on the front and on the back and we come down, did God say anything? Behold Moses, thou shalt go to the foot of the mountain and smash my tablets. I mean, he didn't say that, right? Moses takes these tablets written with the finger of God and smashes them. In my mind's eye, I wonder, was there any kind of... I mean, did they just shatter? Did they explode? Was there some kind of a supernatural energy flash or something? I mean, these things were written with the finger of God.

It makes a great emphatic point. God made these tablets. God wrote these tablets.

God has had these in His hands. How many things can you say that about that are not derivative? You can see the work of God in creation, but something that God has actually had His divine hands on. Here they are.

You're carrying them down. You're the only man in history, so to speak, to touch something God has touched. I can't think of another example.

Maybe Eve and Adam. They both came from the hand of God. But ever since then, we have derivative.

These are trees descended from trees. These are animals descended from animals. These are people descended from people.

This is a process God set in motion, but we're dealing with results. This is something God made, and Moses smashes it at the foot of the mountain. I mean, to me, this is a stunning piece of activity.

What do you think a museum would pay even for one fragment of these tablets? If you don't think people have not found Jebel Musa and some of these other mountains that have haunted

all around, hoping to find even a tiny fragment of these tablets, I assume they are there somewhere. Right? It doesn't say, and behold, the Israelites did pick up the fragments and save them as souvenirs. You can go to Civil War battlefields today.

I've often wondered also if you could find the exact spot of the crossing of the Red Sea because you would find all these chariots and swords and spears and possibly bone fragments and so on of all of it. I mean, there was a huge pile of Egyptians that got drowned. And there ought to be something left there, some archeological... But of course, now you've got the Suez Canal, so it's probably all underwater.

But these tablets smashed by Moses. Moses is the ostensible leader and head of the nation of Israel at this point, right? And as we have seen over and over again, here's my point, the king or the leader or the prominent ruler in Israel at any given point often reflects the people. We saw this in the New Testament and the Gospels, in Mark and in Luke.

Herod, when he imprisons John the Baptist, he's intrigued, he's fascinated, he wants to hear more, but he won't release him and he won't accept his word. He doesn't have a change of mind. He's got a Jewish cultural background at least.

The Herods have some Jewish background. He could easily believe and accept and come to faith based on the preaching of John the Baptist, but he doesn't. But he won't release him.

He's just fascinated. He listens, but he's kind of sitting on the fence. He won't decide one way or the other.

And then God forces him to choose by the dance. Herodias and her daughter, Salome, the whole thing with the dance. I promise you whatever you want, I want the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

Now he has to choose. He can't sit the fence anymore. And when forced to choose, he chooses death for John the Baptist.

He is a picture as the king in Israel, as the leader in Israel. He's a picture of the people who with both John the Baptist and Jesus sit the fence. They're fascinated by the miracles.

They find him intriguing. They come and listen, but they won't accept. And they don't necessarily reject outright.

So you have people on both sides. Some accept, and Pharisees who reject. But in the middle, you've got this great mass of people who are just undecided.

Some say, what does Jesus say? Who do men say that I am? Some say you're Elijah. Some say you're another one of the prophets. And Jesus says, well, who do you say that I am? Ultimately, the people are forced to make a choice.

Instead of the dance of Salome, you have the betrayal of Judas and the arrest and Pilate

bringing him out and saying, what do you want me to do with this man? I can release him, or I can execute him. And they say, crucify him. And when they're forced to a decision, they do the same thing that Herod did with John the Baptist.

They put him on the cross. They kill him. Well, Absalom, you can see the same thing.

The duplicity of the people as they choose Absalom. You see it time and again in the history of Israel. And you see it first here.

This is one of the first places where there is a mirror held up to the nation of Israel in their leader, in Moses. Moses taking this covenant and smashing it on the ground is a picture of what the people have already done with the covenant that they agreed to, that they were sprinkled in blood. God says they have destroyed themselves.

They have broken the covenant. Moses breaks the covenant, literally, on the ground. And I think this is his motivation.

Does he do this just out of emotional anger? Does he do it with knowledge? Is it symbolic? Does he recognize that these commands cannot stand in this condition? That it's a waste of time to bring them any further? That the people are not worthy to see them? What are his options? Have you ever thought about it? What could Moses have done right here? Take the tablets back up and say, Lord, I just want to put these back up here for a while until I deal with these people. I'll come back up and get them. Bring them down later.

He says, this particular copy of the covenant is defunct. It's broken before the ink is dry, so to speak. And he smashes it.

It's gone. The one written with the finger of God is gone. Now what's going to happen 1400 years in the future? Almost 1500 years in the future? This is roughly 1440 B.C., 1445 B.C. Some 1500 years later, the Lord Jesus Christ is going to come.

He is the Word of God incarnate. He is flesh. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, John says, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

That's where our church gets its name, John chapter 1, full of grace and truth. And what happened? Jesus said in the upper room to the disciples, this is my body which is broken for you. He is broken on the cross as the living version of the covenant, the mediator, the meeting place between God and man, that tablet that is written on both sides, the God side and the man side.

He is smashed at the point of rejection, bruised beyond recognition because of sin. That's exactly what is foreshadowed here. So, He broke them at the foot of the mountain.

He didn't say anything that is recorded here. His actions speak louder than words. He comes

down.

You get the idea that the dancing stops. Somebody says, hey, here comes Moses. And the whole revelry and debauchery stops.

This is like when the parent comes in the room and the kids have been misbehaving. Door opens. People hear the squeak.

Everybody looks over and it all ceases. And everyone looks with a sense of impending dread and doom. Oh, now we're in for it, we used to say.

We're in for it now. Dad's home. Mom just came in.

Now we're in trouble. And so it all stops and you get the idea that all eyes are on Moses. And the first thing Moses does is he holds these tablets up from afar, smashes them on the ground.

Israel knows they have lost something but they don't know what it is. They haven't heard what's on those tablets. He smashes them.

Then what does he do? Then he took the calf which they had made. Now listen, Moses is one man. He's got Joshua by his side.

There are how many hundred thousand Israelites all dancing around this calf? The power of the knowledge that he is right and they are wrong holds them still in their place. Could you easily see that as soon as Moses walks up to this calf, half a dozen guys could just grab him and beat him to a bloody pulp and say, start the music. Let's continue.

The moral high ground, if you will, on which Moses stands renders these people speechless, renders them incapable of action. Moses, as a single man, walks up to the calf, takes the calf which they had made, burns it in the fire. Now how do you burn solid gold in the fire? You don't because it's not solid gold.

He takes it and busts it up. He just busts it up. And you get the idea that the anger burning hot, people go out and chop wood or do some kind of physical exertion, box a punching bag or something to take out some frustration.

You get the idea that Moses picked up the biggest bronze axe he could find and just started wailing on this calf, chops it into kindling and then sets it on fire. And all this time, you have to imagine the people are just standing there in a state of shock and guilt and recognition of the awfulness of what they have done because not one of them lifts a finger to stop him. This is the God that brought you out of the land of Israel where here's one old guy, 80 years old, chopping at the splinters with an axe.

That's what he does. Burns it in the fire. Then he took the ashes.

Now how long does it take to burn a statue of this size? I don't know how big the thing was, but

let's just say it's a moderate size deal. Let's say it's 8 feet tall, 6 feet tall, a couple, 3, 4, 5 feet in diameter. Chops the thing up, lights it on fire.

How long does it take to burn? You put a couple of big logs in your fireplace, it'll burn 3 or 4 hours at least. No words are spoken. The whole time this thing gets burnt down to cinders.

And of course, the gold leaf that's all over it, the hammered gold exterior, this flame is evidently hot enough to kind of this stuff goes melting down into the carbonized ashes and so on. So then Moses takes what's left. He takes the ash pile and whatever gold is down in there and grinds it up.

Now you can't grind gold to powder normally, right? You can hammer it, you can melt it, you can do a lot of things, but it's pretty difficult to grind gold to powder. Now when it says he ground it to powder, you notice it is in italics? It just says he ground something to powder. I think this is largely the wooden ashes.

This is going to be ash powder, mostly. Whatever happened to the gold, he would have had to have special equipment to grind gold. He would have had to get some kind of grinding wheels, you know, millstones or something.

I mean, this just tells us he grounded to powder. Then he scattered it on the water. Now if you did have gold dust and you scattered it on water, what would happen to it? This is the minor 49er Clementine.

I mean, it sinks, right? It doesn't float. Gold doesn't float. It sinks.

People that pan for gold get the sediment off the bottom and pan because it's not floating. So even if there were gold dust, you're not going to be able to drink it. It sinks.

This is the carbonized remains of the wooden frame. This is basically black carbon. You pour it on the water.

It's going to float. It's going to be ugly. But he scattered it on the water and he made the children of Israel drink.

So what does he do? There's some big tank of water there. They have some kind of drinking water that they have been partaking of during their days at the foot of Sinai. There may have been some rivulets and streams.

People have laboriously hauled water and carried it to these big communal fountains, so to speak, big bowls or whatever, where people can come and get the water. Moses goes to the communal water reservoir. This must be a pretty big pot load of ashes that he has ground to powder.

He dumps the whole thing in. The only water available to drink now until they haul fresh has the remains of this calf in it. Of all of the different things that Moses could do, why does he

grind it to powder, pour it in the water, and make them drink it? By the way, just as an aside, and I don't think this is the main point, but do you know what it does to your system if you eat ashes, if you ingest carbon ashes? It's an emetic.

It's not good for you. It doesn't make you feel good. People use this to purge, to clean their system out.

Moses, educated in the universities of Egypt, knows exactly what ingesting carbon, powdered carbon, is going to do. This is a symbolic way of saying, let's just get this all out of your system. You all are full of it.

Let's get it out, basically. This is my theory. Why else would he do this? Why does he make them drink it? To symbolize that they all partake of the sin, that they all partake of the judgment, the fiery judgment on the statue, perhaps emblematic of individual personal judgment, could be, but I will tell you the physical effect of drinking dissolved ashes in water is not a good one.

The whole camp, with their entrenching tools, this is going to be the immediate result. Everybody is going to suddenly have a crying need to go outside the camp with their entrenching tool. Scattered it on the water, made the children of Israel drink, and Moses then said to Aaron, after this medicine is administered, if you will, to the entire, and Moses would have had to issue orders, tribe of Reuben, step forward.

Bring your dippers. Dip. Drink.

Tribe of Simeon, bring your dippers. Drink. Tribe of Levi, bring your dippers.

Drink. Tribe of Judah, all the way down the list of tribes. Every tribe comes by, takes a dip, drinks of this polluted water.

Then he says to Aaron, what did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them? So Aaron said, do not let the anger of my Lord become hot. Well, it's a little late for that. What he's really saying is, do not let your anger burn hot against me.

I see what you did to the tablets. I see what you did to the calf. I see what you've done to the people.

The only thing that hasn't had anything done to it yet is me. Don't let your anger burn hot. I mean, what are you going to do? Smash me? Burn me? Grind me? Or feed me to the people? What are you going to do? Don't let your anger burn hot.

You know the people. They are set on evil. You know these people.

They said to me, make us Elohim that shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. This is completely true.

It's exactly what happened. Look at verse 24. I said to them, whoever has any gold, let them break it off.

So they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out. I cast the gold into the fire, and this calf came out. How many times have we sort of changed the story a little bit to absolve ourselves of any direct complicity or blame? You know these people are evil.

They said, make us an Elohim. I said, bring me some gold. I just threw it in the fire.

The calf came out. Does this remind you of back in the garden? Behold, the woman thou gavest to be with me. She gave to me, and I did eat.

Woman, is this true? The serpent beguiled me. That's why I ate. Of course, the serpent, he looks to his left, there's nobody to blame.

Adam looks to his left, there's Eve. Eve looks to her left, there's the serpent. The serpent looks to his left, there's nobody there, except maybe his legs, and so they go away.

They gave it to me. I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out. I don't know, dad.

It just broke. How did that get broken? I don't know, dad. It just broke.

We were just sitting here, and it just broke. Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained, for Aaron had not restrained them to their shame among their enemies, Moses stood in the entrance of the camp and said, whoever is on the Lord's side, come to me. Now, you do not see this in the Ten Commandments movie.

You almost never hear about this episode. Read this closely. Look at what happens next.

The reason for it, see up front, the reason is given ahead of time. People say, what kind of a thing is this? The reason is they are unrestrained. What is our biggest problem? Lack of self-control.

The man who bridles his tongue can bring his whole body into subjection. Humility is self-control. The fruit of the Spirit is self-control.

Moses sees that the people have no self-control. Aaron could not restrain them. Aaron had not, he doesn't say he could not, he says he had not restrained them to their shame among their enemies.

The problem with lack of self-control is not so much we say, well, just let me be and let me do to myself whatever I'm going to do. That's not the problem. What happens to your reputation? What happens to your witness to the world? If we're not worried about witnessing verbally because we understand that we are to let our light shine in our life, if we don't have self-control, our life is no kind of witness.

And it is a shame among the enemies. God's enemies are looking on, human history, watching us. God is trying to make a point about faith and righteousness and communion with Him.

If we fail that task and get busy singing our own song, it's a shame among our enemies. Moses stood in the entrance of the camp and said, whoever is on the Lord's side, come to me. You notice come is in italics? To me! You see this in warfare sometimes.

They'll yell out the name of their side. They'll say, you know, 26th Regiment, to me! That's what Moses says. Whoever is on the Lord's side, to me.

All the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to Him. Notice, 11 other tribes, actually 12 other tribes, do not come to Moses. Only the Levites.

You get the idea that they were the least enamored of the whole golden calf thing. The Levites gathered to Him. Moses says to them, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, let every man put his sword on his side and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp and let every man kill his brother.

Let every man kill his companion. Let every man kill his neighbor. The whole time I was growing up, I got Bible stories about Moses and the golden calf.

All I thought happened to the people is they had to drink this bitter water that had the ashes in. Nobody ever went to this part. So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses.

And about 3,000 men of the people fell that day. The Levites come to Moses. He says, gird on your sword.

Go to the entrances of the tents and kill the people standing there. Why? Why kill them? Who stands in the door of the tent? Who by standing in the door of their tent like Dathan and Abiram? You remember earlier on when we had the Nadab and Abihu incident? And Moses said, come down in front of the tabernacle. They said, no, we're going to stand at our tent.

It is an act of defiance. These people are silent and they don't stop Moses from burning the calf and causing them to drink the water, but they don't agree and they're defiant. And when Moses says, whoever is on the Lord's side, to me.

These leaders of households stand in their tents. They're not inside. They're not busy.

They're not out tending the flock. They're standing there with their arms folded in their tent saying, make me. Who says you know what's the Lord's side anyway? I'm going to stand right here.

They're standing at the entrance of their tent with their arms folded saying, make me. I'm drinking the water. That's as much as I'm doing.

You say, come down here. I don't acknowledge your leadership. I don't acknowledge your

authority.

I don't acknowledge the God that you claim to be serving. That God that you just busted up and ground down and made us drink from. I like that one better.

So they're standing in the doorway of their tent. Moses says to the Levites, go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp. This is the threshold.

This is the doorway of each tent. If the man is standing there and does not come to the Lord's side, kill him. I don't care.

And when he says, every man is brother, this is brother Israelite because the Levites have come. They're not killing other Levites. But these are their brethren in the sense that Joseph's brothers, Jacob's sons are all brethren.

Let every man kill his brother. Every man his companion. Every man his neighbor.

So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses and 3,000 of the people fell that day. If you do the math, my uncle was telling me about a week or so ago that he wasn't sure that Moses did the right thing by listening to Jethro when his father-in-law came back with Zipporah and said, you can't sit here and judge the people all day. You need to appoint captains of tens and fifties and hundreds and all that and let them judge the people.

And he was adding up, well, how many leaders does that make in Israel? And there were many, many. You can do the math when it says that there were 600,000 men in Israel. Well, if you have captains over those volumes of people, how many total leaders does that give you? Well, lost a lot of them right here.

These judges, these elders, these clan leaders and family leaders are standing in the doorway of their tents defiantly and the Levites go entrance to entrance and kill them. Now what do you think about the number two guy in each household when he sees Pop standing in the doorway defiant, run through and killed by a Levite? He says, you know, we need to rethink the whole family position on this matter here. You know, one down, one to go.

Now I'm going to stand. Am I going to stand in the doorway of the tent? Maybe I better rethink this. Then Moses said in verse 29, consecrate yourselves today to the Lord so that He may bestow on you a blessing this day.

For every man has opposed his son and his brother. What did Jesus say in the New Testament? If somebody loves father and mother more than me, he cannot be my disciple. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

I will divide parents and children. I will divide fathers and daughters and mothers and sons. He says, I will divide because there is a time when you have to choose who is on the Lord's side.

Now, we don't kill anybody in the literal sense. But there is a time when you say, if I'm going to

advance in my spiritual life, I can't be held back by this family matter. I can't be held back by this problem or this issue or this history.

I can't let somebody keep putting something on me from the past and define me and put me in a box and to try to keep the peace, I just go along or I don't conflict, I don't make waves, I don't rock the boat. For many of us, there comes a time where you have to say, you know what? Serving the Lord is more important and it divides a family and there is a distance. You no longer have the same kind of fellowship when everybody was happy-go-lucky dancing around the calf.

You say, I'm coming out. I'm going to stand with Moses. And if it means leaving people behind, leaving them standing in the doorway of their tent because they won't come to the Lord's side, then that's what I have to do.

I have to consecrate myself. The root of this word consecrate means separate, just like in the New Testament. Sanctify, separate, come ye out, be separate.

And that will divide families. It will divide brothers. It will divide companions, just as it did here in Israel.

Verse 30, It came to pass on the next day, Moses said to the people, you have committed a great sin, so now I will go up to the Lord. Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin. What a statement.

You have sinned. I will go up to the Lord. Perhaps I can make atonement.

Moses, once again, just as you find in Hebrews when the author makes a comparison, he says Moses was faithful in his house, in his dispensation. The Lord Jesus was faithful in His house, in His dispensation as an intermediary, as a spokesman. Moses, of course, in a feeble and shadow sense, but we have a mediator far beyond what Moses can do for the people.

Can Moses go up and atone for the people's sin? He cannot. Can the Lord Jesus make atonement for our sin? Does He sit now at the Father's right hand and make intercession for us? He does. The question is, the Word of God tells us that.

How real is it to us? Is it going to change the way we live our life? Are we going to live differently this afternoon because we know there's a God, we know there is a mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus? He died for me. He gave my life a purpose and a meaning. Who is on the Lord's side? Who is going to live their life for God? Who is going to sing a song and dance around a calf that is going to turn to ashes and you're going to have to drink the bitter results? That's the question that this passage poses to us first and foremost.

There is a question asked of us every day. Who are you living your life to please? And you can stand there defiantly in the doorway of your tent, but it's to no avail. The sword of discipline will come just as we saw it over in Hosea chapter 6, just as we've seen it in the days of Ezekiel.

It is just as true today. Nothing lasting, nothing permanent, nothing of any satisfying long-term value comes from dancing around the calf. It's fun while it lasts, but it lasts only a moment.

And then our iniquities like the wind carry us away. So regardless of where we are spiritually, regardless of what we think our maturity level is, every day the question is asked, Who is on the Lord's side? And who is going to stand in the doorway of the tent with their arms folded saying, Make me. I don't have to.

We will drink the bitter consequences if we don't respond to that call. That commitment may separate us from others, but what's most important? What's going to last? It is faithfulness to God that defines us as Christians that is essential to receive our inheritance and to fulfill our purpose. It's a sobering call, but there is such great reward when we hear it and when we heed it.

Well, we're out of time for this morning. We'll pick up in chapter 33 next time. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the clear way that you have demonstrated the importance of our life and our choices in the day in which we live. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths in our hearts. Let us not forget the dear price that was paid on the cross to deliver us and to rescue us and that that is a call and a commitment for us to glorify you in our daily life.

We pray that our lives will glorify you and will reflect glory and credit on the Savior. We pray it in his name. Amen.